

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****Patent and Trademark Office**

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/459,305 12/10/99 FURUHATA

T 0015.0010

024033 MM91/0925
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EXAMINER

TRAN, T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2811

DATE MAILED:

09/25/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.	Applicant(s)	
09/459,305	FURUHATA, TOMOYUKI	
Examiner	Art Unit	
Thien F Tran	2811	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-12, 15 and 17-29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 13, 14 and 16 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 11.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restriction

1. Applicant's election with traverse of claim 16 in Paper No. 9 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the office action indicates no claims are generic and Applicant submits that claims 13 and 14 are generic claims. This is not found persuasive because it is well settled that species are required to be restricted if it is shown that these species are distinct. It is clearly established that embodiments 1-3 are in fact distinct in Paper No. 7. The generic claims 13 and 14 will be considered along with claim 16 drawn to the elected species.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371© of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

3. Claims 13-14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Hirayama (US 6,015,725).

Hirayama discloses the claimed semiconductor device (Fig. 6) comprising gate insulating films 6, floating gates 32, dielectric films 33 and control gates 34, all of which are laminated on

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first and second cell areas on a semiconductor substrate 2; sources (3, 4b, 4a) and drains (5a, 5b) formed on the first and second cell areas; a connecting area 4a capable of electrically connecting the source of first cell area with the source of the second cell area, wherein a groove 14 is formed on the connecting area on the semiconductor substrate, wherein the impurity concentration of the connecting area is higher than the impurity concentrations of all the sources and drains of the first and second cell areas. Since the impurity concentration of the connecting area 4a is higher than those of the impurity areas 3 and 4b, the electric resistance of the connecting area 4a is inherently lower than those of the impurity areas 3 and 4b. Hirayama does not explicitly disclose the gate insulating films 6 being a tunnel insulating films. However, in EPROM device, gate insulating films perform the function as tunnel insulating films wherein electrons from the channel region are injected (tunneling) through the films into the floating gate so charge can be stored in the floating gate during the write operation. Therefore, it is inherent that the gate insulating films 6 are tunnel insulating films.

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Thien Tran** whose telephone number is (703) 308-4108. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Tom Thomas**, can be reached on (703) 308-2772. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 308-7722.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

tt

Sara W Crane
Sara Crane
Primary Examiner

September 20, 2001